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difficult piece, the "Esmeralda Fantasia," by Antonio Bazzini, the celebrated Italian violinist, who is still living and well known in Germany, and who, like Sivori, is one of the most renowned virtuosos of modern times.

After this performance, and others I heard during my visit, it struck me as evident that the practical cultivation of orchestral playing—according to the Italian standard—is zealously and successfully carried out, and I was able to compliment Sig. Pinto sincerely on the fact. As to how it fares with pianoforte playing and the vocal art, I could not, on account of the limited time at my disposal, satisfy myself. But if I might express an opinion on the pianoforte playing I had previously heard in Italy, it would, with some exceptions, not be, as a rule, very favorable. Then, however, the piano, on account of its poverty of tone and eminently ideal character, is no instrument for a nation that seeks and finds the greatest charm of musical enjoyment in sensually beautiful but, so to speak, tonally elementary melody.

That, on the other hand, since Verdi gave his compositions to the world, vocal art has visibly fallen off in Italy needs no longer any corroboration. As I was about leaving, I found an opportunity which I had greatly desired of making the personal acquaintance of the Maestro Saverio Mercadante, whose opera, *La Vistale*, I had heard in Rome. The grey-haired artist, who is nearly seventy years of age, and who, three years ago, had the misfortune to become totally blind, was delivering an address to a large number of the pupils, attended by some of the professors. He is a man of small, spare stature. His head was covered with a little velvet cap. He was sitting in a dignified attitude upon a sofa, while those present respectfully formed a semi-circle round him. He spoke in a clear and sharply accentuated voice, his words being enforced by animated gestures. Sig. Pinto seized a fitting opportunity to introduce me. The sprightly old gentleman immediately broke off his address, and entered with me into conversation, in which, with almost diplomatic dexterity, he gave utterance to some well turned remarks on German music and musicians. He ended by courteously charging my conductor to see that I carried away with me a favorable impression of the institution committed to his care.

The Neapolitans have no little reason for being, to a certain extent, proud of this Conservatory; for not only is it the oldest of its kind in Europe, but many celebrated artists, including some masters of the first rank, received their professional education there. Among them I will mention only the following:—Scaratti (the operatic composer) whose Christian name was Alessandro; Feo, Leo, Durante, Monteverde, Pergolese, Paisiello, Cimarosa, Spontini, and many more. The library, kept in admirable order by Sig. Florimo, contains a most valuable collection of manuscripts of the above mentioned, and other pupils more or less celebrated, of the Conservatory. Among the autograph MSS., I observed two operas by Feo; eleven operas by Leo; some sacred compositions by Durante; six operas by Alessandro Scarlatti, and several works by Pergolese.

Sig. Florimo informed me that he is at present engaged in writing a copious history of the Naples Conservatory. It will no doubt contain some important contributions to the history of music, and, in consequence, its publication must be expected with interest.

VON WASIELEWSKI.

THE SONS OF THE CLERGY.

The 213th anniversary of the festival of the "Sons of the Clergy" was celebrated on Wednesday afternoon by a full choral service under the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. We need hardly say that this ancient and admirable corporation was instituted for the purpose of assisting necessitous clergymen, pensioning their widows and aged single daughters, educating, apprenticing, and providing outfits for their children.

The actual President is the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Vice-President, Lord Cranworth. The following extract from the printed programme of the day will suffice to recall to our readers the history and objects of the corporation:—

"The first festival was held in St. Paul's Cathedral in the year 1655, when certain zealous members of the Church, moved with compassion for the helplessness and privations of the clergy, suffering under the calamities of those times, formed themselves into an association to alleviate their distress. This private association was soon followed by the establishment of a public body, incorporated by Royal Charter from Charles II., and which, from the circumstance that the first promoters of the festival were all sons of clergymen became commonly known as the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy. It is especially desired to raise the amount of the pensions to the widows and aged single daughters of deceased clergymen, of whom there are 712 receiving from £15 to £25 per annum; and the Governors feel confident there must be many wealthy and benevolent individuals who would be happy to assist in so just and good an object, did they know the extent of the pecuniary distress, and consequent suffering and privations into which a large number of excellent ladies are thrown by the death of husbands and fathers, whose life incomes as clergymen afforded no means of laying by a provision for their widows and orphans."

No effort being spared to render this annual festival worthy of the object in view, it holds a foremost place among celebrations of the kind, and rarely fails to create an amount of public interest sufficient to bring to our metropolitan Cathedral a congregation numerically inferior only to that which assembles annually at the meeting of the Charity Schools. A large part of this is due to the remarkable efficiency of the musical part of the service, in the performance of which the regular choir of St. Paul's is strengthened by the co-operation of the choirs of the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey, together with considerable reinforcements from other sources. The proceedings on the occasion of the present anniversary differed in no material respect from those of former celebrations. There was the usual civic procession, which entered by the great west door, and, joined by the dignitaries of the Church, proceeded up the nave, headed by the members of the united choirs in long array. Next to the Cathedral clergy came the Festival Committee, the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex, the aldermen, and, finally, the Lord Mayor of London, accompanied by the dignitaries before named.

The musical part of the service, as always, was directed by that zealous and indefatigable teacher, Mr. Henry Buckland, conductor of the choir at the Special Services under the dome, and of the 5,000 singing children at the annual meeting of the Charity Schools; Mr. Goss, organist of St. Paul's, and Mr. G. Cooper, deputy organist (also organist at St. Sepulchre's), presiding at the noble instrument built by Messrs. Hill, which has for some years been a musical, though, for lack of a case, hardly an architectural ornament of the church. Tallis's evergreen music to the "Suffrages" was given with the accustomed effect by the members of the combined choirs (about 200 strong), its grand and simple harmonies resounding through the building with a solemnity which seems to be its exclusive property. The long Psalm for the day (the 78th) was sung to a quadruple chant in F, the composition of Mr. Herbert Oakeley (Edinburgh professor of music), which last year created so favorable an impression. Without wishing to depreciate the composition of Professor Oakeley, excellent in its kind, we cannot but express a hope that the form of the quadruple chant will never gain an absolute footing in the choral services at our great cathedrals. The "Magnificat" and "Nunc dimittis" were from Walsley's service in D. These were good; but far better was the anthem, "O give thanks unto the Lord" (Psalm 106 and 118), by Mr. Goss, a composer of whose Church music his country has solid reason to be proud. This

anthem is in every sense a master-piece, and we hope to hear it as often as possible—until, indeed, its gifted author feels moved to produce another, to take its place. A happier blending of the free and rich coloring of the modern style with the conventional forms to which many insist Church music ought strictly to be prescribed, it would be hard to cite in any contemporary work of the kind. But of this felicitous combination of the two styles Mr. Goss has produced other examples. Mendelssohn's touching and beautiful anthem, "Hear my prayer" (Psalm 55), preceded the sermon. In this the solo part was taken by Master Henry, of the St. Paul's choir, a young gentleman with a very pleasing voice, who accomplished his task with a correctness and expression hardly to be looked for at his years. The choir in this anthem was thoroughly efficient, while the organ accompaniment was played in a masterly manner. Handel's magnificent "Worthy is the Lamb" (the last piece in "The Messiah") was the anthem which followed the sermon.

PARIS.

That "Romeo and Juliet" is the most fertile of subjects for operatic treatment history can show. There are more lyric settings of Shakespeare's play than even Voltaire's play, "Semiramide." And no wonder, since the one seems in reality moulded into libretto form, and wooing the musician to illustrate it by his art; while the other, though tempting by its oriental grandeur and barbaric magnificence, is feeble in plot and destitute of human interest. The first composer who set "Romeo and Juliet" to music was Benda, who wrote his opera in 1778. The second who wedded musical strains to Shakespeare's play was the famous Steibelt, who, on his arrival in Paris about the year 1790, was all the rage as a composer. M. de Segur had translated and adapted "Romeo and Juliet" into a libretto for the Grand Opera, and the composition of the music was entrusted to Steibelt. The opera, nevertheless, was repudiated by the directors of the Académie Royal de Musique et de Danse in 1792, and, in revenge, the authors turned the recitatives into spoken dialogue, and had the piece represented at the Theatre Feydeau in 1793. The chief result of Steibelt's Romeo was that it snuffed out Benda's Romeo. Then came the Romeo—or the "Romeo and Juliet"—or the "Romeo e Giulietta"—or the "Copuletti ed I Montecchi," for by these names was the opera variously called—of Zingarelli, which, being more dramatic and novel, and being acted better snuffed out Steibelt's opera; which, in its turn, was snuffed out by Vacca's Romeo; which, in its turn, was snuffed out by Bellini's Romeo, which in its turn, was not snuffed out by Hector Berlioz's Romeo, because the Frenchman's opera is no opera at all, nor intended for an opera, but is a species of dramatic oratorio, a singular combination of lyric drama and symphony. Now, whether M. Gounod's Romeo will ultimately snuff out all the Romeo's that have preceded it must be mere matter of guess work. The majority of French critics assert that the new Romeo will not only snuff out all other Romeos, but all M. Gounod's operas to boot, not ignoring "Faust" or "Mirella," to say nothing of snuffing out all other operas ever written. When I hear M. Gounod apostrophized as one of the sublimest musical geniuses the world has seen, and Madame Miolan-Carvalho eulogized in terms that could only properly be addressed to Patti or Rachel, I begin to think there must be a large amount of prejudice pervading the critical atmosphere, or judgment has altogether gone to the dogs. There is much diversity of opinion about M. Gounod's opera. Many contend that it does not come up to the mark of "Faust," "Mirella," or even "La Médicée Malgre lui." A few insist that it surpasses all that M. Gounod has written. For my own part I think there is much fine music in "Romeo e Juliette"—perhaps the finest the composer has written—and feel assured that it will have a great success at the Royal Italian Opera, more particularly if Mario and Adolina be the hero and heroine.

Its success is undeniable, and they assert that places have been taken in the theatre twenty-five days in advance. That M. Carvalho is replenishing his treasury chest by the receipts accruing from the performance of "Romeo e Juliette," there is no doubt; but this is far from proof that the music is good, or the opera destined to a lasting reputation.

REFLECTIONS, CRITICAL AND SUGGESTIVE.

BY ROBERT SCHUMANN.

[Concluded.]

MODERN SYMPHONIES, AND THE VIENNA COMPETITION OF 1839.—When a German talks about Symphonies he means Beethoven. The two things are to him inseparable, one and the same, his delight and pride. As Italy has its Naples, France its Revolution, and England its commerce, so a German has his Beethoven-Symphonies. Over Beethoven he forgets that he has no great school of painting to show; with him he regains, in spirit, all the battles that Napoleon won over us; he even ventures to put him on a level with Shakespeare. As this great master's creations have grown into our very being, and many of his Symphonies have even become popular, it is natural to suppose that they have left deep traces which would show themselves in the first works of the same kind in the age succeeding them. But this is not the case. Similarities are certainly found, and those both many and close—though it is curious that they should mostly refer to Beethoven's earliest Symphonies, as if each successive one required a certain time before it could be understood and imitated. But the power of employing and maintaining real grandeur of form, where the ideas succeed one another blow after blow, though all the while linked together by an inward spiritual connection—this, with few exceptions, is rarely to be found. Modern Symphonies for the most part sink to the level of mere overture music, especially the first movements. The slow movements are put in only because they are bound to be; the *Scherzos* are *Scherzos* in name only; and the last movements seem to have lost all knowledge of what has gone before them. Berlioz was introduced to us as a phenomenon. Germans in general knew nothing of him, and what little they knew was by hearsay, and seemed only to frighten them, so that some time will probably elapse before he becomes thoroughly known. Assuredly, however, he will not have labored in vain; for phenomena never come singly. The future is already teaching us. Franz Schubert should also be mentioned; but even his Symphonies are not yet known. The competition for the prize at Vienna afforded important evidence of the present level of talent. We may say what we like, competition can only be beneficial—it can never do harm; and those who think that the productive faculties are not roused by excitement even of a prosaic kind, are much mistaken. Had a prize for a symphony been announced during the life-time of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven—such a prize, for instance, as one of those enormous rare diamonds which are found in imperial and royal treasures—I would lay any wager that the great masters would have set to work in earnest. But, then, who could have been the judge?

MENDELSSOHN.—SYMPHONY, OP. 56.—Mendelssohn's new Symphony has been most eagerly ex-

pected by all who are watching with interest the brilliant course of this rare genius. Indeed it was looked forward to almost as his first performance in this department; for the symphony in C minor, actually the first, belongs to his very earliest youth, while the second, written for the London Philharmonic Society, is not yet published; and his "Sinfonia-Cantata" again (The Hymn of Praise) cannot be considered as a purely instrumental work. Therefore, with the exception of the Opera, the Symphony alone was wanting to complete the grand circle of his productions, since in every other branch he had already amply distinguished himself.

We have been told that this Symphony was begun many years ago, during Mendelssohn's stay in Rome, although not completed till quite recently. This fact is interesting as helping us to understand the very remarkable character of the music. As when, in some old and long-forgotten book, we suddenly discover a faded leaf which recalls the past with such vivid distinctness as to make us forget the present, so may all manner of charming recollections have crowded upon the imagination of our composer when amongst his papers he came upon these melodies inspired long ago by the beauties of Italy, and consciously or unconsciously formed them into the lovely picture now before us—a picture which, like Jean Paul's description of Italy in his "Titan," is enough to make one forget for a time even one's regret at not having seen that blessed country. How completely the whole symphony is pervaded by a specially national tone has often been observed—indeed, the observation could escape no one with any imagination. But it is the extraordinary charm of its coloring which gives to Mendelssohn's work, as to Schubert's C major, its special place in the world of Symphonies. Of the instrumental pathos, or spurious breadth now so common, or indeed of anything like an exaggeration of Beethoven there is not a trace. It comes nearer in character to Schubert's Symphony just mentioned, with the difference that, while *that* suggests a wild gipsy life, *this* transports us to Italian skies. Its charms are of a more refined order, and it addresses us in more familiar language than Schubert's, though on the other hand, we frankly allow to the latter a superiority in certain points, especially a greater force of invention.

In its plan, this Symphony is remarkable for the intimate connection of all the four movements. Even the melodies working out of the principal subjects is relatively the same in the four, as will be seen by the most hasty comparison. Thus, more than any other Symphony, it forms one compact whole, the separate movements of which are closely related in character, key, and rhythm. It is the composer's wish (as expressed in the prefatory notice) that there should only be a short interval between each movement.

Looked at from a purely musical point of view, there can be no doubt about the great perfection of the work. In the beauty and delicacy both of its general structure and of its individual parts, it ranks with his Overtures, while it is not less rich in charming instrumental effects. Every page of the score gives fresh proof of the skill with which he can bring back a previous thought, or disguise the return of the subject so as to put it in an entirely new light, or of the power of making his details rich and interesting, without exaggeration or Philistine mock-learning.

The effect of the work on the public will partly depend on the efficiency of the orchestra. No doubt this is always the case, but doubly so here, because force is not so much wanted as finished delicacy in the separate instruments, and especially in the wind. The most irresistible effect is in the *scherzo*, and I doubt whether a *scherzo* more full of genius has been written in modern times; the instruments converse in it almost like human beings. The conclusion of the *finale* is sure to excite difference of opinion; many will expect it to be in the character of the rest of the last movement, instead of which it recalls the opening of the first, and thus rounds off the entire work into symmetry. To me it is a most poetical ending, like a sunset recalling a lovely sunrise.

The pianoforte arrangement is by the composer himself, and is as faithful a version as can well be imagined, though for all that it often conveys but half the charm of the orchestral effect.

ORCHESTRA AND STALLS.

My Lady Maude sits in her stall,
And I stand here waiting the fall
Of Costa's baton; ah well! with all

My fortune spent, what could I do,
I could not dig, and not a Jew
Would put his faith in an I O U.

An amateur not long ago,
Both times and friends have changed, and so
I earn my bread in a way deemed "low."

But ah! I try to play my best,
For my old love comes with the rest—
A little gem on her heaving breast:

(A little gem I know full well;
A gem of which I tales could tell,
Though "but a fiddler" waiting the bell.)

The old man dozing by her side
Looks in the face of his young bride
With feelings strange of terror and pride,

And wonders why the music's strain
Into her face calls bitter pain,
And pitiful looks of self-disdain.

The music is not what it seems,
A sad song 'tis of young love's dreams
Wafted by the sweet Pactolian streams

By which we strayed with footsteps slow:
The sky without a shade of woe—
When we loved so fondly years ago.

But yet I think I've less of care
Than yon old man with whitened hair,
The buyer of that sweet face so fair.

For though I'm lost in change of name,
I live in her sweet thoughts the same—
But hush for "*Robert toi que j'aime*."

JAS. BOWKER.